

REMARKS

Claims 5-12 and 23 are now presented for examination. Claims 1 and 4, 18-22 and 24-25 have been canceled without prejudice and without disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 5 and 8-12 have been amended. No new matter has been added. In view of the Examiner's earlier restriction requirement, Applicant retains the right to present Claims 18-22 in a divisional application.

In a telephone conference, the Patent Examiner has informed the undersigned that the pending Office Action is not a Final Office Action although the box on the Office Action Summary sheet indicated this. The Patent Examiner clarified that the pending Action is Non-Final.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication on page 4 of the Office Action that Claim 23 is allowable.

On page 2 of the Office Action, Claims 1-14, 16, 17, 24 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claims containing the objectionable language (Claims 1, 13, 24 and 25) have been canceled.

On page 2 of the Office Action, Claims 1, 5, 6, 8-14, 16, 17, 24 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,284,345 to Jehn. Claims 1, 13, 14, 16, 17 and 24-25 have been canceled. Claims 5, 6 and 8-12 have been amended to depend from allowable Claim 23 and are therefore believed to be allowable.

On page 3 of the Office Action, Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jehn in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,406,040 to Cannone. Claim 7 has been amended to depend, indirectly, from allowable Claim 23 and are therefore believed to be allowable.

Claims 5-12 have been amended such that each depends directly or indirectly from independent Claim 23, which the Examiner has deemed allowable. These claims recite additional limitations which, in conformity with the features of their corresponding independent claim, are not disclosed or suggested by the art of record. The dependent claims are therefore also believed patentable. However, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

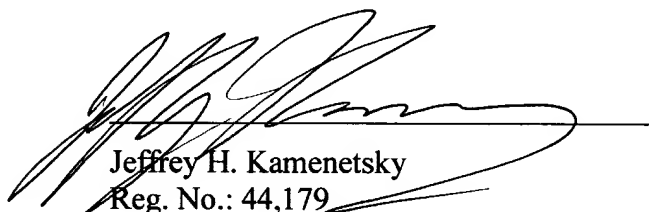
For all of the above reasons, the claim objections are believed to have been overcome, placing Claims 5-12 and 23 in condition for allowance, and reconsideration and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Application No. 09/877,433
Filed: 6/8/2001
Attorney Docket No.: 1075-2U

The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned to discuss any matter that would expedite allowance of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: January 27, 2004

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey H. Kamenetsky', is written over a horizontal line.

Jeffrey H. Kamenetsky

Reg. No.: 44,179

Attorney for Applicant(s)

Christopher & Weisberg, P.A.

200 East Las Olas Boulevard, Suite 2040

Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301

Customer No. 31292

Tel: (954) 828-1488

Fax: (954) 828-9122

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